



Leading the British Government's fight against world poverty



Rob Booth



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7 June 2011

Dear Mr Booth

Freedom of Information Request F2011- 115

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 4 April 2011. You asked for the following information:

"all correspondence in letters and e-mails between the department for international development (senior civil servants and ministers) with senior officials and trustees at the following charities and trusts backed by the Prince of Wales since 5 May 2010.

1. *Turquoise Mountain*
2. *The Prince's Rainforests Project*

DFID holds some information relevant to your request relating to Turquoise Mountain. We do not hold any information relating to The Prince's Rainforests Project.

Please find attached a copy of an exchange of e-mails dated October 2010 between the Head of DFID Afghanistan and the Managing Director of Turquoise Mountain. Please note that we have redacted some information to remove personal details such as private e-mail addresses and names of junior staff under section 40 (2) (Personal Information) of the FOI Act

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me, quoting reference F2011-115.

If you are unhappy with the service we have provided and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to Openness Unit at the address shown above or email foi@dfid.gov.uk within 2 months of the date of this letter.

If you do make a complaint and are not content with the outcome, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted DFID's complaints procedure. You can contact the Information Commissioner at the following address:



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Fax +44 (0) 1355 844009

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The Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

Eilidh Simpson
Openness Unit

DISCLOSURE E-MAIL EXCHANGE BETWEEN DFID AND TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN OCTOBER 2010

From: Shoshana Coburn [shoshana@turquoisemountain.org]

Sent: 31 October 2010 20:17

To: Pauline Hayes

Cc: Moazzam Malik; [name redacted S40]; [name redacted S40]; Rory Stewart

Subject: Re: followup from Moazzam Malik and Rory Stewart - Not
Protectively Marked

Dear Pauline and [name redacted S40]

Really nice to speak with you. Thank you for taking the time.

I was very excited to hear more about DFID's plans to invest in technical and vocational training. The movement from micro business to the SME sector is, I think, a very important one.

Again, I am very grateful for the chance to discuss our vocational training programme. Although Turquoise Mountain has been fortunate in generating sustainable income streams, and donor support, we could certainly benefit enormously from DFID assistance to ensure that we can sustain our current quality levels, and ensure market and employment access as we talked about. We would also be very proud of DFID support, and believe that we have the skills and systems in place and the experience to deliver a high quality result with that support.

You mentioned market research, which I wanted to touch on again. There have been quite a few surveys done, which I hope you will come across, by DAI, ASMED, USAID, the Chamber of Commerce, and others. And as I said, we did quite significant survey work in the beginning of the project as well - but these markets have expanded and developed at a speed that we never could have expected - we've taken the woodworking sector from nearly 0 to about \$200,000 annual, with jewellery now approaching as well. So the question that you rightly asked, about whether we are sure there is a market, or whether it might be saturated, is a complicated one. But because we are one of the only businesses in this field, we are finding that we are expanding the market very quickly (about a 41% increase in the last 12 months). Because these are new markets and sectors, we're able to indicate demand through sales growth. There is as yet, no sign of saturation, partly because the products are unique. Partly also because the demand that we are looking for has a strong export component and is therefore based more on international demand for Afghan products, which itself is heavily influence by taste and economic growth, in the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

One example of the development of unexpected markets is in the Islamic world. We have, for example, been approached for a rather large commission in Saudi Arabia - approximately 4 million dollars over two years, which could not have been filled in Afghanistan even a few years ago, but which now could employ about 150 craftsmen for two years. This would be an example of a project which would be quite difficult to identify through domestic market research, but which is something that would provide significant employment and economic development. While it's impossible to be certain of market trends, there is strong reason to believe that the uniqueness of Afghan crafts and their scarcity will have international appeal. It is difficult to predict such a highly moveable market, but Afghan crafts are unique, there is a lot of interest in Afghanistan at the moment, and the high-end crafts haven't been seen in international markets for thirty years.

There is good reason to believe that if one could get the marketing, design and quality standards right, there will be very considerable growth in this sector. However, the kinds of design knowledge, crafts skills and quality management systems required to sustain exports require real investment in Afghan craftspeople.

There is of course a very understandable sense of urgency and a desire to produce as many trained Afghans as quickly as possible in all sectors. This has resulted in everything from eight week courses for local policemen to six month courses in basic jewellery-making. But, there is also an urgent need for people with much more depth of understanding and skill base if we are to produce a new generation of leaders and entrepreneurs able to deal with the intense and unexpected pressures of Afghanistan and the modern global economy.

In short, I think there is room for both things. We should certainly continue to invest in producing a workforce with some basic skills, but this should go along with the development of genuinely skilled craftsmen and women who can meet the international standards (represented, for example, by the City & Guilds accreditation which we have achieved in Turquoise Mountain).

Alternatively, if you finally conclude that Turquoise Mountain vocational training is not compatible with your strategy, we would be very interested to further explore collaboration on the larger project of the Kabul Rock School, as we talked about.

Also, as promised, I wanted to pass on the name of our Advisor and future Institute Board member, Dr Najib Omary. His email address is: Najib Omary **e-mail address redacted S40**. He does know the TVET sector, from the private and government side, extremely well.

Finally, it would be a pleasure to meet your consultant when he/she comes. Coincidentally, the woman who did all of the initial market research, ran our business development section for years, and was the Managing Director of both Peace Dividend Trust and Turquoise Mountain, **name redacted S40**, will be in town next week. I wonder if she might be a good person to meet the consultant and share her experiences with the Afghan craft sector, and Afghan SME in general?

My very best wishes,

Shoshana

--

Shoshana Coburn
Managing Director
Turquoise Mountain
shoshana@turquoisemountain.org
contact details redacted S40

Registered Office: Broich, Crieff, Scotland PH7 3RX Telephone +44 (0) 1764 650888

TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN TRUST IS REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND AS A CHARITY NO. SC037343 AND AS A COMPANY NO. SC299579

Turquoise Mountain Foundation (US) is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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On Oct 18, 2010, at 6:11 PM, Pauline Hayes wrote:

> Shoshana,
>
> Thanks for getting in touch. I am travelling back to Kabul tonight and
> would be happy to meet you to discuss partnership possibilities further.
> I will ask my assistant, **name redacted S40**, to contact you to set up an
> appointment in the next week or so.

> Regards,

> Pauline

> Pauline Hayes
> Head, DFID Afghanistan
> Kabul

> _____
> From: Shoshana Coburn [mailto:shoshana@turquoisemountain.org]
> Sent: 19 October 2010 00:44
> To: Pauline Hayes
> Cc: Moazzam Malik
> Subject: followup from Moazzam Malik and Rory Stewart

> Dear Paula,

> Hello, and so many apologies for the string of emails. I hope you are
> well.

> >
> I am writing because I believe Secretary of State Mitchell and the
> Director of West Asia Moazzam Malik met my predecessor, Rory Stewart,
> today. Rory has asked me to follow up, since as you know he is no
> longer employed or on the board of Turquoise Mountain, and because Mr
> Malik suggested that we have another try at seeing if there is
> something that we might be able to do together, in a small way, on
> vocational training. We would of course love the opportunity to partner
with DFID.

> >
> In their conversation, Rory understood that there might be a number of
> issues and that Turquoise Mountain might not be a fit for DFID, but
> that perhaps there was a possibility of pursuing something in
> vocational training (Mr Malik counceled against the challenge fund).
> Clearly the issue is that our Institute is a tertiary education body
> offering a three year course at a very high level of training. In
> cost terms this means that it is closer to funding a university
> department than a basic vocational training structure. The benefit of
> course of the more intense longer training is that it does produce
> craftspeople who can genuinely compete in international export
> markets, and should produce a new generation of designers and masters
> who could in turn create the businesses to employ the people with less
> advanced qualification. We have done over a million dollars in sales
> which suggests that the qualifications of the school are creating
> craftspeople with viable livelihoods. We are also having an impact on
> the broader regeneration of the Murad Khane area of the old city.

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> But of course we understand that DFID has a particular focus in
> Afghanistan and our activities may not be an exact fit with DFID. We
> don't want to take up too much of your valuable time, but if you were
> able to spare the time for a last conversation just to see if there
> were anything that we could do together in vocational training, I
> would be delighted to come to DFID to see you or one of your officers,
> or to show someone around the project.
>
> My very best wishes,
>
> Shoshana
>
>
> --
> Shoshana Coburn
> Managing Director
> Turquoise Mountain
> shoshana@turquoisemountain.org
> **Contact details** **redacted S40**

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> Registered Office: Broich, Crieff, Scotland PH7 3RX Telephone +44 (0)
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